

EXHIBIT 23

Children and Family Services – 2018/19 Biennial Budget

Decision Items: Request for Appropriation

Request Description	Family Advocates (SSW1) for the START (Sobriety Treatment and Recovery Teams) Program
Requesting Agency	DCFS
Funding Source	Levy Dollars
Total Impact	
Status	
Index / Object	135509

Is this a grant renewal? Yes ___ No X

If yes, please provide the existing index code:

Summary of Request – Children and Family Services has seen a 62% increase in drug exposed infants over the past four years and the number continues to climb. Opiates is having a devastating impact on the child welfare system, not only burdening the workers with increased caseloads but also putting extra demands on our need for foster parents. START is an intensive case management program that works with children born exposed to drugs and alcohol. This program has been in existence for over 20 years and has shown great results. Women in START stay in treatment longer (2x longer) which results in longer sobriety and less relapse. Children are less likely to return to care and achieve permanency sooner. In 2009, the majority of the START family advocates were laid off. Currently, there are four family advocates and 30 workers. The START model is based upon a 1-1 ratio of worker and family advocate. They are partnered to work as a team to address the needs of the family. The family advocate works with the parent on recovery/treatment issues, while the worker focuses on safety and permanency for the child. In order to address the growing need of children born drug exposed and to return to the fidelity of the model that has proven to work, the START program resources need to be re-built. Therefore, we are asking for 26 family advocates (SSW1). This will bring the department back to full capacity.

Background Information

In this section provide information on the following items:

- Information on program budget – the budget for this program is strictly salary costs. Approximate costs inclusive of benefits are approximately \$1,118,000.
- **Funding source and related history---** Levy funds support our staffing costs.
- Priority/Outcome/Objective – to reduce/eliminate children being abused, to increase access to AOD treatment resources, to support families suffering with addiction issues, while assuring children are safe.
- **Time period - From: To:** Ongoing
- Population/Clients Served Estimate – 483 children were referred to START in 2016.
- Other pertinent information
- *Embed or attach any data or tables to request document*